

On Bill's related to Early voting and the Amendment for No Excuse Absentee Balloting

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Flexer and Rep. Blumenthal, Vice-Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Morin-Bello, Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco, and Distinguished Members of the GAE Committee

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of early voting. Similar arguments apply to No Excuse Absentee Balloting. My name is Larry Rizzolo and I am a resident of Guilford. I never fully appreciated the need for early voting or how long the voting period should be until my 100-year-old mother-in-law became ill. My family's goal was to keep her in her home even though she needed 24 hr care, 7 days/week. We managed to find 5 people who could cover the 3 shifts/per day. Their stories share a common element. Their primary job didn't pay well enough to support their families. Their work for us was there second or third job; some had children or elderly parents to care for. They are representative of the many poorly paid people that were praised as essential workers during the pandemic. When are they supposed to be able to vote?

Their patchwork schedules can't predict in advance when they would be free to vote. One weekend might workout, but the next weekend won't. They can't afford the pay they will lose, if they have to wait in a long line or vote in a venue located a distance from public transportation.

Notably, all the people we hired to care for Mom were minority members of our community. Limiting the times of voting would disproportionately affect that community. Adequate funding is essential to allow all our citizens to exercise their franchise.

Here is what I look for in an Early Voting Bill:

- 14 days, including two weekends
- Early morning and evening hours
- Venues should be handicap accessible and near public transportation (in towns that have a public transportation system).
- The number of venues should be proportional to the number of age-eligible voters
- Applied to all elections -- general, special, municipal, and referendums
- Provide town clerks with the funds they would require
- Fund public education of the new voting procedures
- Roll out in 2023, so that all the bugs are worked out for the 2024 Federal elections.

I also support passing No Excuse Absentee Voting to allow a ballot referendum in 2024. This method of voting was highly successful during the pandemic and very popular among the voters.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

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